

Chapter 2

Benevolent Sexism and Cross-Gender Helping: A Subtle Reinforcement of Existing Gender Relations

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Romantic gestures that men make toward the women they love or whose heart they wish to win often involve providing help—whether it is opening and holding the door, paying for her drink, lifting her heavy suitcase, or completing a complicated task. In these everyday interactions, helping relations between men and women are rarely explicitly framed as intergroup helping, but rather as interpersonal helping. Hence, the consequences of this behaviour for the intergroup level remain concealed. In this chapter, in line with the feminist motto that “the personal is political” (Hanisch, 1970), we argue that when such mundane interpersonal interactions between men and women are aggregated, they can profoundly shape gender relations. Thus, cross-gender helping interactions can perpetuate and consolidate the role of men as competent and agentic, and the role of women as passive, incompetent, and dependent (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Our theorising integrates the logic of the Intergroup Helping as Status Relations model (IHSR, Halabi & Nadler, 2017; Nadler, 2002) on the one hand, and research on benevolent sexism—the ideology that men should offer protection and affection to women in return for compliance with traditional gender roles (Glick & Fiske, 1996)—on the other. Specifically, we reasoned that because benevolent sexism maintains gender inequalities through paternalistic cooperation rather than through overt hostility and conflict, helping relations may play a crucial role in the process of translating this ideology into actual behavioural mechanisms that perpetuate traditional gender roles.

In the following sections, we first present theorising and research on the IHSR, which puts forward the distinction between autonomy-oriented and dependency-oriented forms of intergroup helping, suggesting that the latter might serve as a

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subtle mechanism for maintaining intergroup inequality. We next present theorising and research on benevolent sexism, and explain how this ideology reinforces traditional gender roles through “sweet persuasion” rather than coercion. We then discuss our own line of research, which demonstrates how the endorsement of benevolent sexism leads men and women to engage in dependency-oriented helping relations, which perpetuate traditional gender roles through seemingly cooperative interactions. Based on this research, we argue that helping relations between men and women can become an implicit, indirect mechanism for maintaining the gender hierarchy. We discuss this possibility in the light of related work on the psychological consequences of implicit—as opposed to explicit—forms of intergroup bias (see also Dovidio, Gaertner, & Abad-Merino, 2017; Gabriel, 2017). We conclude by discussing the implications of our work for social change, and by outlining forms of cross-gender helping that may challenge rather than maintain the existing gender hierarchy.

The Motivations and Strategic Aims of Intergroup Helping: The Perspective of the IHSR Model

Helping relations are a fundamental aspect of human societies, and a key to human evolution. Some members of society may be resourceful in some areas, but lack resources in others, creating interdependence among members of society. Accordingly, early sociological theorising (Gouldner, 1960; Homans, 1961) argued that complex societies are built around institutions that serve this interdependence. For example, a doctor may be able to cure a sick teacher, but relies on the teacher when it comes to the education of her children. Thus, human societies maintain helping relations by reciprocity, which ensures that despite the inherent asymmetry in helping (in the sense that the helper possesses greater competence and more resources than the recipient), all members of society engage in it, each contributing their share.

It is debatable whether engagement in helping can be driven by pure altruism, or whether there is always some internal or external reward for helping (Batson, O’Quin, Fultz, Vanderplas, & Isen, 1983; see also Oceja & Stocks, 2017; Van Leeuwen, 2017; Wakefield & Hopkins, 2017). Clearly, helping often not only serves the needs of the recipient of help, but it also has positive consequences for the helper in the form of gaining a positive reputation (Nowak, 2006), reaching a positive emotional state (Isen, 1970; Schaller & Cialdini, 1988), maintaining or restoring a positive self or group moral image (e.g. Brambilla, Sacchi, Pagliaro, & Ellemers, 2013; Hopkins et al., 2007), or increasing reproductive success in the case of helping those who are similar to oneself or who are members of one’s ingroup (Curry & Dunbar, 2013).

Applying these insights at the intergroup level, it can be assumed that although people are generally less willing to help the outgroup members if they hold negative attitudes toward them (e.g. Levine, Prosser, Evans, & Reicher, 2005; see also

SimanTov-Nachlieli & Shnabel, 2017), group members have plenty of “selfish” reasons for offering help to, rather than withhold help from, members of other groups. One such reason to engage in intergroup helping may be the motivation to maintain existing intergroup hierarchies. Because offering help signals the helper’s greater competence in comparison with the recipient, groups can strategically engage in intergroup helping to reinforce their relative advantage. Thus, groups may offer help to affirm their power and independence, to reinforce the meaningfulness of their group identity, and to create positive impressions (Van Leeuwen, 2017; Van Leeuwen & Täuber, 2010). Intergroup helping can also serve as a means of affirming the positive moral value of the helping group, to disprove any negative stereotypes about its moral conduct (Dovidio et al., 2017; Hopkins et al., 2007), and even to provide “moral licensing” for subsequent biased behaviour toward the outgroup that was previously assisted (Dovidio et al., 2017).

These insights serve as the theoretical basis of the IHSR model (Halabi & Nadler, 2017; Nadler, 2002, 2015), which also puts forward a critical distinction between *autonomy*- and *dependency*-oriented forms of helping. In the case of autonomy-oriented help, recipients are provided with tools required for independent coping (Nadler, 2015) in a way that allows for the members of the “weaker” group to maintain their independence, self-worth and sense of competence (Alvarez & van Leeuwen, 2011). By contrast, in the case of dependency-oriented helping, recipients remain passive while the helpers tackle the difficulty for them, addressing their immediate needs without providing them with the tools for self-reliance in the long term (Nadler, 2015). As opposed to autonomy-oriented helping, which empowers its recipients, dependency-oriented helping reflects the belief that the recipients lack the competence to help themselves (Brickman et al., 1982). Dependency-oriented helping highlights the generosity, superior skills, knowledge and resources of the helpers, while leaving the recipients in an inferior, dependent position of indebtedness (Nadler, 2015; Van Leeuwen & Täuber, 2010). As such, engagement in dependency-oriented helping relations may serve as a subtle, seemingly prosocial strategy to maintain and reinforce the hierarchical relations between helpers and recipients, as the recipients of help continue to remain in need of help.

Supporting this reasoning, advantaged group members, especially those with a strong ingroup identification, were found to provide more dependency-oriented help to members of disadvantaged groups in response to threats to the dominance of their ingroup (Nadler, Harpaz-Gorodeisky, & Ben-David, 2009). The authors interpreted these findings by suggesting that the underlying motivation of offering dependency-oriented help was to defend the ingroup’s relative privilege and the existing distance between the groups, while still maintaining the moral advantage of being the helper. Therefore, according to the IHSR model, if advantaged group members are *genuinely* committed to helping members of disadvantaged groups, they need to abandon helping relations that affirm their higher status. This cannot be done by providing only direct assistance that meets the immediate needs of the disadvantaged group (Jackson & Esses, 2000). Instead, advantaged group members need to engage in forms of helping that directly challenge intergroup inequalities, including the sources of their own privileges (Case, Hensley, & Anderson, 2014;

Case, Iuzzini, & Hopkins, 2012, Montgomery & Stewart, 2012; see also the concept of justice-oriented outcomes of help, Van de Vyver & Abrams, 2017). This is particularly the case if helping is not a single event, but ongoing and institutionalised, as in volunteerism (Kende, 2016; Omoto & Snyder, 1995), or if it takes place with the aim of social change, as in ally activism (see Drury & Kaiser, 2014).

As for members of disadvantaged groups, the IHSR model suggests that when they perceive their relative inferiority to be stable (i.e. when status relations are said to be secure, that is, legitimate and immutable; Turner & Brown, 1978) they have little motivation to challenge the status quo. Consequently, they show a greater tendency to seek and receive dependency-oriented help from members of advantaged groups (Halabi & Nadler, 2017; Nadler & Halabi, 2006), and the gratitude they may feel in response to receiving help further legitimises the status quo (Nadler, Halabi, & Harpaz-Gorodeisky, 2009). Therefore, engagement in dependency-oriented helping relations may create a positive experience of intergroup contact. It may thus decrease perceptions of relative deprivation (Powers & Ellison, 1995), build trust between the groups (Wright & Lubensky, 2009), increase common ingroup identity (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2009), and ultimately weaken collective action, which may promote intergroup equality (Nadler, Halabi, et al., 2009; Nadler, Harpaz-Gorodeisky, et al., 2009). Put differently, engagement in dependency-oriented helping relations may have sedative effects that stand in contrast to direct conflict, which fuels the recognition of injustice (Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008) and social competition between the groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

So far, work building on the IHSR model has focused on intergroup relations between conflicting ethnic/national groups (e.g. Israeli Jews and Arabs) or organisations (e.g. competing high schools), but not on relations between men and women, even though their mutual interdependence creates frequent opportunities for intergroup helping. We therefore reasoned that it might be interesting to test the model's predictions in the context of gender relations, especially given that the ideology of benevolent sexism—discussed in detail in the next section—promotes ideas about women and men that prescribe dependency-oriented forms of offering and seeking help between the sexes.

Interdependence Between Men and Women and the Ideology of Benevolent Sexism

The economic and emotional interdependence of men and women is shaped by sexual and reproductive needs (Guttentag & Secord, 1983), and by the cultural histories of gender (Wood & Eagly, 2002). As a result, interdependence between the sexes is fundamentally greater than in any other context of intergroup relations (e.g. between different racial, ethnic, or religious groups, such as Blacks and Whites or Christians and Muslims), and interactions between men and women are frequent and casual, as “gender relations are governed more by role segregation than spatial segregation” (Jackman, 1994, p. 163). For this reason, interactions between men

and women are not necessarily recognised as a form of intergroup contact, but rather as an interpersonal one. To illustrate, if a German citizen offers food to a Syrian refugee, this is clearly viewed as an intergroup exchange taking place between individual representatives of two distinct social groups. However, when a man pays for a woman's dinner or concert ticket, this is more likely to be interpreted as a sign of interpersonal courtesy. Thus, this form of helping is not necessarily recognised as intergroup helping. Therefore, the societal consequences of the latter type of behaviour easily remain invisible.

A second consequence of the high level of interdependence between the sexes is that it motivates women and men to avoid open conflict and hostility (Jackman, 1994), and gives rise to a particular form of social ideology, namely, benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996). According to Glick and Fiske (1996, 2001), this ideology puts women who comply with traditional roles on a pedestal, and rewards them with affection and admiration for complying with the expectations of the existing gender hierarchy. Glick and Fiske (1996) further argue that benevolent sexism comprises three components—complementary gender stereotypes (i.e. highlighting the imminent gender differences and portraying women as having traits and resources that are complementary to those of men; Archer & Lloyd, 2002), protective paternalism and heterosexual intimacy. Taken together, these components represent the belief that women are pure (i.e. moral, warm and sensitive) creatures who need to be supported and protected by men, who are in turn perceived to be incomplete without the love of women (Glick & Fiske, 2001).

Despite its seemingly egalitarian tone (portraying both genders as having certain resources and competencies), this benevolent view of complementary roles reflects a sexist ideology. First, its portrayal of traditional gender roles as a mere reflection of “the way things are” provides a biased view of reality, as sociological analysis demonstrates that gender roles, and corresponding competences and resources, show great diversity throughout history, cultures and social classes (Lindsey, 2015). Second, these traditional roles clearly reflect a systematically asymmetrical distribution of resources, such that those possessed by men have greater societal value than those possessed by women. Specifically, gender stereotypes place men higher on the socially more valued (e.g. better paid) competence dimension and women higher on the socially less valued warmth dimension (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007). Associating women with warmth rather than competence is at least partially responsible for the vertical and horizontal occupational segregation between men and women (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007), which often limits women to the “pink-collar ghetto” (Stallard, Ehrenreich, & Sklar, 1983). Further supporting the notion that benevolent sexism is indeed a form of sexist bias against women are the findings of a cross-cultural study that examined levels of sexism in 19 nations (Glick et al., 2000). This study revealed that, across nations, benevolent sexism correlated positively with hostile sexism (i.e. the belief that women are manipulative and use either their sexuality or the feminist ideology to gain dominance over men). Moreover, benevolent sexism was predicted by greater levels of gender inequality at the national level. The latter finding suggests that benevolent sexism stems from and reflects a social order characterised by male dominance (Glick et al., 2000).

Benevolent Sexism as a Form of Subtle Bias

Because modern societies formally endorse egalitarian values (Moscovici & Pérez, 2009), preserving intergroup inequality often requires subtle, implicit and even benevolent forms, rather than direct oppression (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Dovidio et al., 2017). When intergroup bias appears in a veiled form, it is difficult to recognise it as a type of prejudice or discrimination, not just by the perpetrator, but also by the victim and wider society (Durrheim, Greener, & Whitehead, 2015; Monteith & Walters, 1998). Although these unrecognised forms of bias and prejudice are difficult to fight against because of their veiled nature, they do lead to discriminatory practices that are psychologically, socially and economically damaging (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Greenwald et al., 2002; Wright & Taylor, 1998). For this reason, much of the socio-psychological literature on subtle, implicit, symbolic, aversive or indirect racism has been devoted to revealing and exposing these veiled expressions of intergroup bias (see Dovidio et al., 2017).

Similar to prejudice against other groups, prevalent forms of sexism can appear at different levels of explicitness—whereas sometimes it is still blatant like “old fashioned sexism” (Swim & Cohen, 1997), contemporary sexism is more often manifested in covert and subtle forms, which are difficult to pinpoint (Swim & Hyers, 1999). In particular, in most Western societies there is a legal and institutional guarantee for gender equality that motivates people to disguise their sexist attitudes and behaviours so as not to exceed a socially acceptable level. Benevolent sexism is a clear example of such a disguised intergroup bias. Because of its seemingly positive tone, its subtle mechanism is difficult to recognise by both men and women (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005). To illustrate this, even though the endorsement of benevolent and hostile forms of sexism correlate strongly (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Glick et al., 2000), in a study by Kilianski and Rudman (1998), women considered it unlikely that the profile of a hostile sexist and the profile of a benevolent sexist described the same person. Furthermore, women rated a target male as more likable when presented as benevolently sexist rather than as non-sexist or hostile-sexist (Bohner, Ahlborn, & Steiner, 2010).

Exactly because of its seemingly positive tone, benevolent sexism can in some cases be even more detrimental for women than blatantly hostile sexism—which typically elicits a confrontational, angry response from women. One example supporting this argument is the sedative effect of benevolent sexism on women’s engagement in collective action aimed at challenging gender inequalities. Studies by Becker and Wright (2011) exposing women to manifestations of either hostile or benevolent sexism found that only the latter undermined women’s support for collective action. This effect was mediated by increased justification of the gender system. By contrast, exposure to hostile sexism increased women’s collective action tendencies (Becker & Wright, 2011; see also Jost & Kay, 2005). Along the same lines, exposure to benevolent sexism, but not to hostile sexism, increased women’s state self-objectification, body surveillance, body shame and plans to engage in

appearance management behaviours (Calogero & Jost, 2011; see also Shepherd et al., 2011). Finally, exposure to benevolent (but not to hostile) sexism interfered with women's cognitive performance, an effect mediated by the mental intrusions women experienced about their sense of competence (Dardenne, Dumont, & Bollier, 2007). In summary, women are not only less likely to recognise benevolent sexism as a form of sexist bias, they are also more likely to accept the gender hierarchy and behave in ways that perpetuate traditional gender roles when exposed to benevolent sexism (i.e. under benevolent sexism women, show less competence, and they self-objectify in line with their role as a member of "the fairer sex").

Whereas these studies investigated the effects of situational exposure to benevolent sexism, other studies have examined dispositional aspects of benevolent sexism. Here, the endorsement of benevolent sexist ideologies was found to be strongly predicted by various forms of motivated cognition, such as a need for closure and right-wing authoritarianism (Christopher & Mull, 2006; Roets, Van Hiel, & Dhont, 2012; Sibley, Wilson, & Duckitt, 2007). Benevolent sexism, in turn, predicted the placement of restrictions by men and women on women's behaviour during courtship (e.g. finding it inappropriate for women to make sexual advances towards men; Viki, Abrams, & Hutchison, 2003; Sakalh-Uğurlu & Glick, 2003); it predicted the view of women as responsible for housework (Silván-Ferrero & Bustillos López, 2007), it predicted the increased prioritisation of power values (i.e. the acceptance of dominance/submission as an organising principle for one's social life; Schwartz, 1996), and it predicted a reduced prioritisation of universalistic values such as intergroup equality and social justice (Feather, 2004). Moreover, benevolent sexism predicted women's acceptance of ostensibly protective prohibitions imposed by a husband or romantic partner, such as prohibitions of taking a long drive or participating in an internship that involves work with criminals, especially when justified as a concern for the woman's safety and wellbeing (Moya, Glick, Expósito, de Lemus, & Hart, 2007).

Although accumulating evidence points to the true oppressive nature of benevolent sexist ideology, it is nevertheless highly appealing to both men and women. Benevolent sexism appeals to men because it allows them to simultaneously enjoy a privileged position at the expense of women and to maintain a positive image as women's protectors and providers. It appeals to women because it guarantees that men's privilege and power will be used to their advantage (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Moreover, the ideology of benevolent sexism secures harmony between men and women, and as such, it addresses their motivation to avoid an open conflict (Jackman, 1994).

Benevolent Sexism and Engagement in Dependency-Oriented Cross-Gender Helping Relations

Our own research programme integrated the logic of the IHSR model (Nadler, 2002, 2015) with that of research on benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 2001), taking into account that benevolent sexism is manifested in cooperative rather than confrontational

behaviour. As the IHSR model informs us, intergroup hierarchies can be secured by the subtle mechanism of engagement in dependency-oriented helping relations, which reaffirm the powerful group's dominance, and which bestow moral legitimacy on the privileged standing of the high-status group. Building on the IHSR model, we predicted that benevolent sexism would encourage men and women to engage in dependency-oriented, cross-gender helping relations. Specifically, we expected that the endorsement of or the exposure to benevolent sexism in men would lead to their preference to provide dependency-oriented (rather than autonomy-oriented) help to women in need. Correspondingly, the endorsement of or the exposure to benevolent sexism in women was expected to lead to their preference to seek dependency-oriented (rather than autonomy-oriented) help from men.

Importantly, our predictions referred to domains in which women are stereotypically perceived to be inferior to men, such as technology, maths, and mechanics (Shinar, 1975), rather than traditionally feminine domains such as housekeeping or child-rearing. Thus, we investigated cross-gender helping relations in contexts in which men are believed to be capable of helping women. Of course, in exchange, women are stereotypically seen to be capable of helping men in other areas of social life; hence, women are not exempt from the reciprocal exchange of helping (Gouldner, 1960; Homans, 1961). Although investigating helping relations in such traditionally feminine domains is an intriguing direction for future research—which we discuss in detail later—we chose to focus on traditionally masculine domains as the first step in our research programme. This choice stemmed from our reasoning that women's dependence on men in these domains serves to perpetuate traditional gender roles (whereas, if anything, women's dependence on men within traditionally feminine domains challenges traditional roles).

Our research programme (see Shnabel, Bar-Anan, Kende, Bareket, & Lazar, 2016) included a series of four studies, both correlational and experimental, investigating how benevolent sexism shapes women's and men's engagement in dependency-oriented helping relations. Participants comprised both Israelis and Hungarians, and benevolent sexism was measured in some studies and experimentally manipulated in others. In terms of outcome variables, we examined participants' helping intentions in addition to actual helping behaviour in both same-gender and cross-gender interactions. In addition, we examined participants' support for two types of policies that help women as a group: empowering forms of help that challenge the status quo of gender inequality through increasing women's power and competitiveness, and non-empowering forms of help that provide direct assistance to women while maintaining the status quo (Jackson & Esses, 2000; see also Thomas & McGarty, 2017, for the distinction between benevolent and activist forms of generosity).

Our first study was a correlational study, which aimed to assess the association between men's and women's dispositional levels of benevolent sexism on the one hand, and their intentions to engage in dependency-oriented cross-gender helping on the other. For this purpose, we first measured the benevolent sexism of participants using the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (i.e. the ASI, which measures both benevolent and hostile sexism; Glick & Fiske, 1996). We then presented participants with a

series of nine helping scenarios. Both male and female participants were presented with scenarios in which a woman had difficulty with a particular mundane task, such as parking a car, fixing an electrical device, filling out complex bureaucratic documents, or solving a maths problem, and a male acquaintance was said to be capable of assisting her (i.e. had the time, skills, and knowledge to help her tackle the task). Female participants were asked to imagine themselves in the role of the woman in need, and male participants were asked to imagine themselves in the role of the man in a position to help. For each scenario, male participants had to choose between three courses of action: not to intervene (i.e. let their female acquaintance handle the difficulty by herself), provide her with tools for independent coping (i.e. explain to her how to approach the task—representing autonomy-oriented help), or provide her with direct assistance by performing the task for her (representing dependency-oriented help). Female participants had to choose among not seeking help, seeking autonomy-oriented help (i.e. asking their male acquaintance for advice on how to perform the task on their own), or seeking dependency-oriented help (i.e. asking him to perform the task for them). To illustrate, explaining how to use the steering wheel and mirrors to get into a parking spot represents autonomy-oriented help, and swapping with the driver and parking the car for her represents dependency-oriented help.

The study was conducted among men and women in Israel and in Hungary. Altogether, we had 196 Israeli women, 127 Israeli men, 118 Hungarian women, and 106 Hungarian men in the sample. In general, participants in the Hungarian sample expressed more sexist attitudes than participants in the Israeli sample. In both samples, consistent with previous findings (see Glick et al., 2000), benevolent sexism correlated strongly with hostile sexism. Also consistent with patterns observed by Glick et al. (2000), the levels of benevolent sexism were similar in the two genders (whereas hostile sexism was higher among men than among women). Most importantly, our results indicated that in both the Israeli and the Hungarian samples higher levels of benevolent sexism among women correlated with stronger intentions to seek dependency-oriented help from men, and higher levels of benevolent sexism among men correlated with stronger intentions to provide dependency-oriented help to women. Interestingly, hostile sexism did not generally correlate with intentions to engage in dependency-oriented helping relations, consistent with our theorising that engagement in such relations is predicted by the endorsement of a subtle, seemingly positive, sexist ideology (such as benevolent sexism), rather than a blatantly antagonistic one.

Notably, although dependency-oriented help in this study was related to mundane, even trivial actions, the social implications can be far reaching. Social norms, including the ones pertaining to gender roles, are often formed and taught inadvertently through daily interactions with those who already accept the social norms as part of “the way things are” (e.g. Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). To illustrate, if a young girl’s father provides her with dependency-oriented help when she asks for assistance in fixing a toy or if she watches her mother asking her father for dependency-oriented help when tackling a problem on her computer, this girl grows up learning a critical lesson about the roles and abilities of men and women.

In a second study, we used an experimental design in which participants were either exposed or not exposed to benevolent sexism, based on the assumption that exposure to benevolent sexism can create situational influence similar to dispositional sexist ideologies (see Becker & Wright, 2011). Also, using scenarios similar to those used in the first study, we manipulated the type of interactions to which participants responded. Specifically, we asked them to report their intention to provide or to seek help within either cross-gender or same-gender interactions. Our first goal was to demonstrate that in cross-gender interactions, exposure to benevolent sexism leads to engagement in dependency-oriented helping (thus further establishing the causal argument advanced above). In addition, we aimed to demonstrate that exposure to benevolent sexism would not affect dependency-oriented helping in same-gender interactions. In particular, it would not increase men's tendency to provide dependency-oriented help to other men, because benevolent sexism is associated with the expectation of men to be self-reliant (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Similarly, it would not increase women's tendency to seek dependency-oriented help from other women, who they do not expect to serve as their "knights and protectors" (Rudman & Heppen, 2003).

The participants were 352 female and 220 male Israeli students. Adapted from Becker and Wright's (2011) study, participants assigned to the experimental condition had to memorise, for an alleged memory test, six sentences conveying benevolent sexist ideas that were said to reflect prevalent beliefs in Israel (e.g. "Secretly, most women yearn for a man whose arms they can find protection and security in"). By contrast, participants in the control condition had to memorise neutral sentences (e.g., "Tea is healthier than coffee"). Participants responded to the same set of scenarios that was used in the correlational study described above, but we manipulated the gender of the acquaintance from whom they sought help (for female participants) or to whom they provided help (for male participants).

The results supported our predictions. In cross-gender interactions, exposure to benevolent sexism increased women's intention to seek dependency-oriented help (from men) and men's intention to provide such help (to women). By contrast, dependency-oriented help-seeking was not affected by exposure to benevolent sexism in same-gender interactions. Putting it another way, when participants were not exposed to benevolent sexism, they showed similar levels of intention to engage in dependency-oriented helping relations in cross-gender and same-gender interactions. However, when exposed to benevolent sexism, women sought more dependency-oriented help from men than from women, and men offered more dependency-oriented help to women than to men. These results support our theorising pertaining to the causal role of benevolent sexism in leading women and men to engage in dependency-oriented cross-gender helping relations.

After gaining initial support for our theorising, the next step in our research programme was to examine the influence of benevolent sexism on the actual behaviour of the participants (i.e. beyond behavioural intentions). Given that the route from intentions to behaviour may be rather complex (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), doing so was critical for establishing our argument. We conducted two experiments: the first examined women's help-seeking behaviour, and the second examined men's

help-providing behaviour. Both studies used an adaptation of Nadler and Chernyak-Hai's (2014) procedure, in which participants were ostensibly told that the study examined internet teamwork and was conducted in collaboration with a bogus online partner. Depending on the experimental condition, this fictitious partner was either a man or a woman.

Participants in the third study were 217 female Hungarian students who occupied the role of "students", in which they took a difficult psycho-technical test that measured their mathematical, logical, and technical ability. To stress the practical importance of knowing how to pass such tests, participants were told that tests of this kind are commonly used in the process of employee selection, and that it was therefore highly likely that they would be required to pass similar tests when entering the job market. Upon completion of the test, participants were informed that they got several answers wrong. They were given the opportunity to ask their partner, who served in the role of "instructor", for help that was either dependency-oriented (i.e. getting the final answers) or autonomy-oriented (i.e. getting hints on how to solve the questions on their own).

Participants' behaviour was consistent with our theorising. After controlling for their pre-existing psycho-technical ability (greater ability predicted fewer requests for dependency-oriented help), we found that participants' benevolent sexism (which was measured before the test) and the instructor's gender (which, as mentioned above, was experimentally manipulated) had an interactive effect on seeking dependency-oriented help. Specifically, as illustrated in Fig. 2.1, benevolent sexism

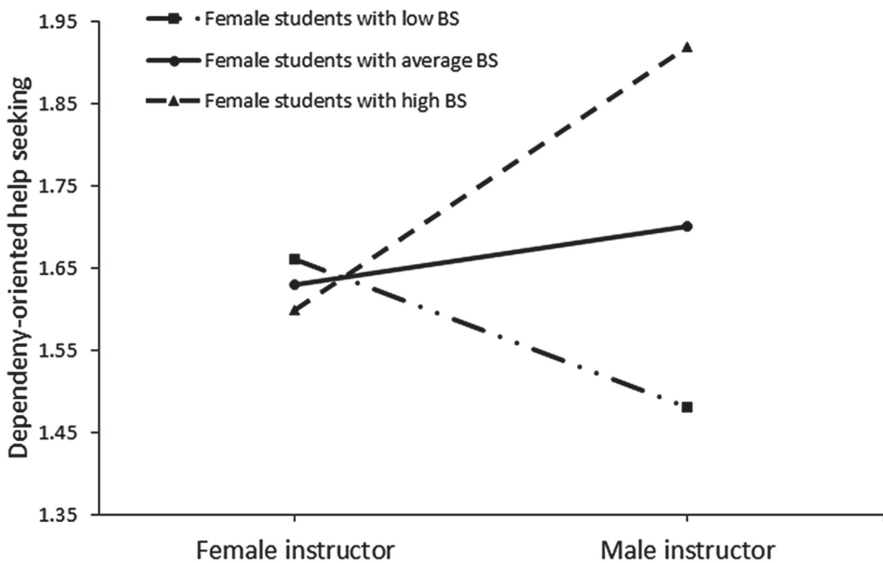


Fig. 2.1 The effect of the instructor's gender on dependency-oriented help-seeking (i.e. the number of requests for final answers) among female participants with low, average and high levels of benevolent sexism

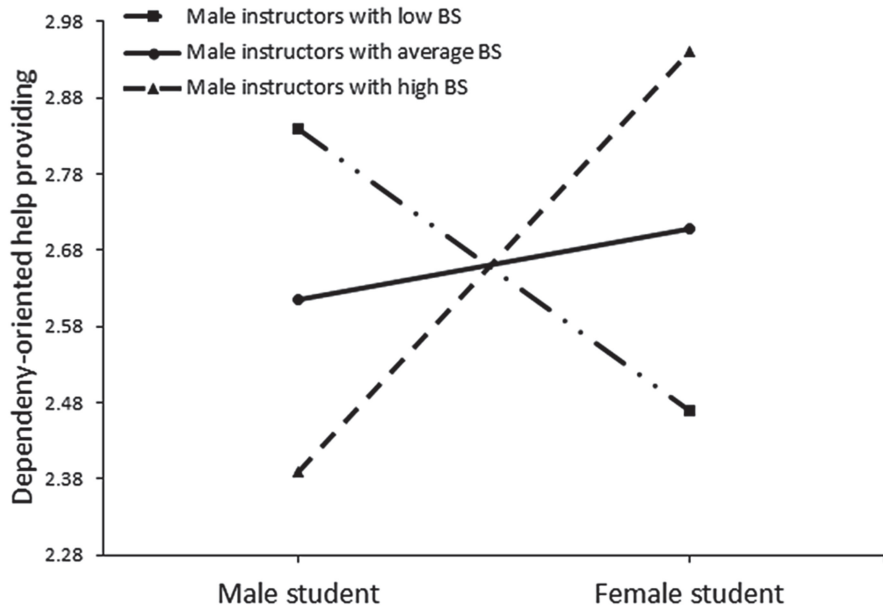


Fig. 2.2 The effect of a student's gender on dependency-oriented help-providing (i.e. the number of final answers given to the student) among male participants with low, average and high levels of benevolent sexism

did not predict women's help-seeking behaviour when interacting with a woman, yet it predicted more requests for dependency-oriented help when interacting with a man. As another way to interpret this interaction, it can be said that being instructed by a man, rather than a woman, increased dependency-oriented help-seeking, specifically among women whose endorsement of the ideology of benevolent sexism was relatively high.

In the final study in our research programme, we tested actual helping behaviour (this time, help-providing) among men. Participants comprised 198 male Israeli students. The procedure was identical to that of study 3 except that participants served the role of "instructors" who had to respond to help requests from their (fictitious) "partners" who had ostensibly solved a difficult psycho-technical test. As part of their role as instructors, participants received the questions used in the psycho-technical test along with the correct answers and an explanation on how to solve them. For several questions, participants were notified that their "student" had asked for their help. They then had to choose whether to provide the "student" with the final answer (reflecting dependency-oriented help) or with a hint explaining how to solve the answer (reflecting autonomy-oriented help).

The results, illustrated in Fig. 2.2, matched those of the female sample. After controlling for participants' psycho-technical ability (greater ability was associated with a lower level of provision of dependency-oriented help), helping behaviour was predicted by the interaction of the participant's level of benevolent sexism

(which was measured before the psycho-technical test) and the partner's gender (which was experimentally manipulated). Specifically, when interacting with a woman, male participants with a higher level of benevolent sexism had a stronger tendency to provide dependency-oriented help. Interestingly, and in line with our theorising that benevolently sexist people expect men to be self-reliant, the opposite effect was observed in same-gender interactions. Men's benevolent sexism predicted providing *less* dependency-oriented help when the recipient of the help was a man. Interpreted differently, we found that men who strongly endorsed benevolent sexism offered more dependency-oriented help when instructing a woman (as opposed to a man). The opposite effect was observed among men with relatively low levels of benevolent sexism, who provided *less* dependency-oriented help to a woman compared with a man.

In both of these studies, besides observing participants' actual helping behaviour (namely, seeking or providing final answers), we had participants complete a series of explorative measures, disguised as "feedback questions about the teamwork". The real purpose of these measures was to shed light on potential mediator(s), leading to increased engagement in dependency-oriented helping among benevolent sexists in cross-gender interactions. Interestingly, in both studies the results pointed to partner's assumed expectations as a mediator of the interaction between benevolent sexism and the partner's gender.

In particular, when their instructor was a woman, female participants' benevolent sexism did not affect their assumptions about their partner's expectations (i.e. their beliefs regarding how she expects them to behave). However, when their instructor was a man, female participants with a high level of benevolent sexism assumed that he expected them to seek dependency-oriented help more than participants low in benevolent sexism. In addition, participants aligned their behaviour with what they assumed their partner expected them to do. In other words, benevolent-sexist female participants assumed that their male instructor expected them to ask for dependency-oriented help—and so they did. Correspondingly, if they had a high level of benevolent sexism, male participants whose student was a woman assumed that she expected them to provide her with dependency-oriented help—and so they did. By contrast, when instructing a male student, benevolently sexist men assumed that the male student expected them to provide him with autonomy-oriented help—and these assumptions led them to provide this type of help. These findings have important practical implications for pointing to potential strategies for breaking the assumed expectations-behaviour alignment cycle, which we discuss in the section *Implications for social change*.

Support for Empowering Versus Non-Empowering Policies Intended to Help Women

Although so far we have discussed cross-gender helping relations within interpersonal interactions, such helping relations are also institutionalised and reflected in state level policies and in the practices of civil society. We therefore measured, in

the first study in our research programme (i.e. the nonexperimental study), participants' support for policies and governmental programmes aimed at helping women. Building on Jackson and Esses' (2000) earlier theorising, we reasoned that some forms of help provided to women (e.g. quotas to ensure fair representation in parliament or on boards of directors, or affirmative action programmes to encourage women's entry into high-tech industry) may be conceptualised as empowering because the consequence would be an increase in women's competitiveness and dominance in society. Such help can be viewed as transformational, because it can substantially change the existing social order (Thomas & McGarty, 2017). Other forms of help (e.g. funding shelters for abused women, or introducing legislation that guarantees national insurance to housewives), although utterly vital, may nevertheless be conceptualised as non-empowering in the sense that they do not increase women's competitiveness. Put differently, the recipients of non-empowering help, as opposed to the recipients of empowering help, are seen as women who fit the stereotypical perception of women as being relatively low on agency and competence (Fiske et al., 2007). Helping them may thus contribute to maintaining the seemingly cooperative relations between men and women, yet without challenging traditional gender roles.

We found that benevolent sexism generally correlated with support for non-empowering policies, but not with support for empowering policies. Put differently, benevolent sexism predicted support for helping women by addressing their immediate needs. By contrast, despite its seemingly chivalrous tone, benevolent sexism did not predict greater support for helping women when this help had the potential to empower them as a group and increase their social dominance and competitiveness—potentially leading to changing the existing gender hierarchy. Thus, benevolent sexism prompts help only to the extent that this help does not challenge the status quo of traditional gender roles and inequality.

Conclusions, Future Directions, and Implications for Social Change

Previous research on gender and helping has focused mainly on comparing women's help-seeking behaviour with that of men (e.g. Galdas, Cheater, & Marshall, 2005; Veroff, 1981), and on the antecedents and consequences of the observed gender differences (e.g. Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Rosner, 1990). The line of research presented in this chapter extended this work by looking not only at whether or not women seek help, but also at the *type* of help they seek, and how it relates to their endorsement of sexist ideologies and to situational cues (such as exposure to benevolent sexism). Moreover, our research examined an additional aspect of this phenomenon, namely, the type of help that men choose to offer women, and the way it is shaped by their endorsement of or exposure to sexist ideologies.

In four studies, we found a systematic connection between, on the one hand, dispositional and situational aspects of benevolent sexism and, on the other, intentions to engage in, and actual engagement in dependency-oriented, rather than autonomy-oriented cross-gender helping. A similar pattern emerged at the institutional level, in which we found that benevolent sexism predicted support for non-empowering policies but not for empowering policies—which may be regarded as institutional forms of autonomy-oriented helping. These findings fit with the notion that helping relations can contribute to maintaining social hierarchies through hidden and indirect mechanisms that guarantee the maintenance of harmony between groups (Becker, Glick, Ilic, & Bohner, 2011; Nadler, Halabi, et al., 2009; Nadler, Harpaz-Gorodeisky, et al., 2009), and that benevolent sexism provides a powerful ideology encouraging men and women to engage in such relations (Becker & Wright, 2011; Jost & Kay, 2005).

From a broader theoretical perspective, our findings that benevolent sexism entices both men *and* women to engage in dependency-oriented helping relations is consistent with theorising that—perhaps ironically and counter-intuitively—intergroup inequality is often the result of intergroup cooperation (Jackman, 1994). Thus, members of advantaged groups, especially if they are motivated to maintain the dominance of the ingroup, often show bias against members of disadvantaged groups. At the same time, members of disadvantaged groups, especially if they believe that their ingroup's inferiority is justified, often show self-debilitating behaviour that further contributes to group inequality (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; see also Jost & Hunyady, 2005). In the present case, sexist men were found to offer more dependency-oriented help to women (but not to men), whereas sexist women sought more dependency-oriented help from men—thus exhibiting *coordinated actions* to maintain the status quo.

As the next step in our research programme, we aim to explore helping relations within traditionally feminine domains (e.g. housekeeping and child-rearing). In line with our theorising that sexist men and women act in a coordinated way to maintain traditional gender roles, we hypothesise that benevolently sexist women would offer dependency-oriented help to a man (but not to a woman), practicing tasks such as soothing a baby or ironing a shirt. At the same time, benevolently sexist men would seek more dependency-oriented help from women when tackling such tasks. Such helping behaviours, if found, may at least partially explain why, despite the progress towards equality in terms of women's increased representation in traditionally masculine domains, men are still underrepresented in traditionally feminine roles (e.g. nursing and childcare) and are often seen as less capable of performing family-related tasks (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). The lack of symmetry in crossing gender boundaries and the more severe social punishment of men can be recognised as an important source of maintaining the gender hierarchy (Hesley & Crane, 2016).

Implications for Social Change

Although perceived social costs may contribute to men's and women's engagement in dependency-oriented cross-gender helping, our findings that participants aligned their behaviour with what they assumed their partner expected from them optimistically point to a strategy that may effectively disrupt this vicious cycle. This finding suggests that if a male help-provider explicitly conveys that he expects a request for autonomy-oriented help, women, regardless of their level of benevolent sexism, would no longer show increased dependency-oriented help-seeking behaviour. Similarly, if a woman in need explicitly conveyed that she expects to receive autonomy-oriented help, men (again, regardless of their level of benevolent sexism) would no longer show a preference for providing dependency-oriented help. The possibility that conveying explicit expectations to engage in autonomy-oriented helping relations can disrupt the cycle of dependency is consistent with the findings of Nadler and Chernyak-Hai (2014). Focusing on a context of socio-economic status differences, this research found that when a member of a disadvantaged group explicitly requested autonomy-oriented help, advantaged group members viewed this person as especially competent and motivated, thus successfully disrupting the belief that members of the disadvantaged group are chronically dependent.

Awareness of the adverse consequences of engagement in dependency-oriented cross-gender helping relations may further contribute to breaking this vicious cycle. Supporting this possibility, a study by Wakefield, Hopkins, and Greenwood (2012; see also Wakefield & Hopkins, 2017) found that women who were made aware that they may be stereotyped by men as being dependent were less willing to seek help from men (thus actively confronting the dependency stereotype). Our finding that men with low levels of benevolent sexism provided less dependency-oriented help to women than to men suggests that men might also be motivated to confront traditional gender roles. As members of an advantaged group, men can challenge sexism by offering autonomy-oriented help, both in their interpersonal interactions with women and on a collective level. Of course, if men recognise the importance of their alliance in closing the gender gap, they also need to accept that activism on behalf of women cannot be based on paternalism. This implies not speaking up for women, but rather supporting women's efforts to speak up for themselves.

In conclusion, we hope that beyond increasing our understanding as to how cross-gender helping may perpetuate traditional gender roles, our work also provides insights regarding strategies for combatting this cycle.

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